



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **KEVIN SHELLEY**

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Secretary of State Kevin Shelley Encourages Absentee Voting, Voter Registration and Participation at Urban League Event

*Unveils Voter Education Website myvotecounts.org for the
October 7, 2003 Statewide Special Election*

SACRAMENTO --- Secretary of State Kevin Shelley, in his keynote address today to The Greater Sacramento Urban League's Grand Opening of the African American Voter Registration, Education, and Participation Project, unveiled specific steps of his outreach plan to educate voters for the October 7, 2003 statewide special election. Shelley informed the audience that a downloadable absentee ballot application is available on line in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean at www.ss.ca.gov or can be found on the back of the county sample ballot mailed to each voter by their county elections department.

"We encourage voters to vote by mail to be able to take the time in the comfort of their own homes to read and understand this unique ballot and ensure their vote counts," said Shelley.

Citing the need to close the "participation gap" between voters and non-voters, Secretary Shelley announced the introduction of a new website, myvotecounts.org and a corresponding pamphlet, designed to provide voters and community organizations with all possible resources to participate fully in the October 7, 2003 statewide special election. Secretary Shelley also highlighted the fact that the Secretary of State's Office is now providing voter information hotlines, and will soon sponsor public service announcements and newspaper advertisements, all in these seven different languages.

California voters who want to vote by mail for the October 7th statewide special election can begin requesting an absentee ballot beginning today through September 30th.

Completed absentee ballots must be delivered to either a polling place or the voter's county elections office before the polls close at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. All legally cast absentee ballots in the custody of election officials by the close of polls on election night are counted and are reflected in the official vote totals.